

Message Text

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63

ACTION ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 EUR-25 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-07 H-03

INR-10 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03

SS-20 USIA-15 AID-20 DRC-01 /141 W

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P R 252120Z JUN 74

FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 7022

INFO USCINCSO

AMEMBASSY BRASILIA

AMEMBASSY MADRID

S E C R E T BUENOS AIRES 4680

USCINCSO FOR POLAD; BRASILIA FOR AMB BOWDLER

REF: BA 4614 (NOTAL)

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR (JUAN DOMINGO PERON)

SUBJ: PERON'S HEALTH

1. SUMMARY: EMBASSY NOW CONVINCED THAT PERON'S HEALTH PROBLEM IS MORE SERIOUS THAN ADMITTED PUBLICLY BY GOA--THOUGH THAT IS NOT TO SAY THAT HE CRITICALLY ILL. HE IS UP AND ABOUT BUT WILL HAVE TO MAINTAIN REDUCED SCHEDULE FOR INDEFINITE PERIOD. VICE PRESIDENT IS CUTTING SHORT VISIT IN MADRID BECAUSE OF HUSBANDS HEALTH PROBLEM. END SUMMARY.

2. TWO LONG TIME EMBASSY SOURCES WITH CLOSE CONNECTIONS TO PERONS INNER CIRCLE HAVE NOW ADMITTED TO US THAT PERON IS IN FACT QUITE ILL. HE IS NOT BEDRIDDEN, NOR BY ANY MEANS CIRITICAL LIST, BUT HE HAS NOT RECOVERED FROM COLD; ON CONTRARY, COLD HAS TURNED INTO FLU AND THERE HAVE BEEN RESPIRATORY COMPLICATIONS. HE IS UP AND ABOUT AND HAS RECEIVED SOME VISITORS. FURTHER HE DID CHAIR CABINET MEETINGS ON JUNE 21 AND 24. HOWEVER SOURCES CANDIDLY ADMIT WHILE PRESS SPEAKS

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OF TWO HOUR MEETINGS, FACT IS THEY WERE MORE FOR APPEANCES

SAKE AND LASTED LITTLE MORE THAN FIFTEEN MINUTES. NO PICUTRES WERE PERMITTED BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE BEEN IMMEDIATELY APPARENT THAT PERON IS IN POOR HEALTH. GOA WISHES AT ALL COSTS TO AVOID ALARMING PUBLIC AND IS DELIBERATELY PLAYING DOWN WHOLE ISSUE.

3. SOURCES SAY VICE PRESIDENT HAS DECIDED TO CUT SHORT HER STAY IN MADRID AND RETURN HOME. THIS IS PRECAUTION, NOT EMERGENCY MEASURE--AS EVIDENCED BY FACT THAT SHE WILL NOT RETURN FOR YET SEVERAL DAYS.

4. SOURCES INDICATE LOPEZ REGA IS TELLING INNER CIRCLE--NOTABLY LASTIRI AND DAUGHTER NORMA--THAT HE RETURNED BECAUSE OF PERON'S ILL HEALTH. SOURCES CLAIM THERE WAS NO CRISIS NIGHT OF JUNE 19-- MORNING OF JUNE 20 WHICH CAUSED AIDES TO RECALL HIM. INDEED GIVEN LENGTH OF FLIGHT, SINCE LOPEZ REGAR ARRIVED HERE JUST AFTER MIDN DAY JUNE 20, IT IS ALMOST PHYSICALLY IMPOSSIBLE THAT RETURN WAS IN RESPONSE TO SUMMONS AT THAT LATE DATE. HOWEVER LOPEZ REGA REPORTEDLY HAS INDICATED HE WAS SUMMONED TO COME BACK DAY OR SO EARLIER (I.E. JUNE 17-18) ON BASIS OF REPORTS OF COMPLICATIONS IN PERON'S HEALTH.

5. EMBASSY REMAINS UNCONVINCED THAT THIS WAS PRIMARY REASONSON FOR LOPEZ REGAS RETURN (THOUGH IT MAY WELL HAVE PLAYED SOME ROLE). HE WOULD HARDLY SAY THAT HE CAME BACK TO PROTECT HIS POLITICAL FLANKS, BUT THERE SEEMS LITTLE DOUBT THAT THAT WAS AT LEAST AN IMPORTANT FACTOR. IT IS INTERESTING, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT MAYORIA PICKED UP ON JUNE 21 REPORT THAT TWO DECREES BRINGING INTO EXISTENCE NATIONAL SECURITY COMMITTEE (WHICH IS ANATHEMA TO LOPEZ REGA) HAD BEEN SCRATCHED IMMEDIATELY AFTER LOPEZ REGAS RETURN. THIS MORNING (JUNE 25) THERE IS OFFICIAL CONFIRMATION THAT THIS IS CASE, THAT THEY HAVE BEEN SUSPENDED.

6. IN SUM, PERON IS QUITE ILL AND IN MAN HIS AGE THAT IS CAUSE FOR CONCERN. HE IS NOT HOWEVER CRITICALLY ILL. SOURCES SAY DOCTORS INDICATE THAT WITH PROPER REST AND IF HE TAKES CARE OF HIMSELF, HE COULD BE BACK ON RELATIVELY NORMAL SCHEDULE IN COUPLE OF WEEKS OR EVEN LESS.
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